

The Racine Parental Choice

Program (RPCP) allows students who reside in the Racine Unified School District (RUSD) to attend any participating private school if certain eligibility criteria are met. The private school, on behalf of the pupil's parent or guardian, receives a state aid payment for each eligible student. Contact the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the list of schools participating in the program. You may also access the program's webpage at: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/choice_programs.

Student Eligibility

Students in grades kindergarten through 12 residing in the RUSD may apply for the Choice program at a participating private school during a period the school is accepting Choice applications. Students new to the program must meet the income and prior year attendance requirements. To qualify for the program in the 2015-16 school year, a new student must reside in the RUSD and have a family income equal to or less than 300% of the federal poverty level income limits shown below. If the child's parents/legal guardians are married their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income eligibility for the program.

300% of the Federal Poverty Level -- 2015-16 Maximum

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Yearly Income</u>
1	\$35,571
2	\$47,946
3	\$60,321
4	\$72,696

For each additional member add \$12,375

In addition, a new student must meet one of the following attendance requirements: (1) have attended a RUSD school in the prior year; (2) not been enrolled in school in the prior year; (3) applying in 2015-16 for grades kindergarten, first or ninth or; (4) participated in the RPCP in the prior year.

All students must apply each year and provide documentation that they reside in the RUSD. Students that participated in the program in the previous semester or students that were on the RPCP waiting list at a RPCP choice school in the prior year are not required to provide income documentation.

Payment of Allowable Fees

A private school may charge a Choice student reasonable fees for personal items such as towels, gym clothes or uniforms, social and extracurricular activities if the activity is not a part of the required curriculum, musical instruments, meals, and high school classes not required or credited for graduation. A Choice student cannot be charged fees for registration or application to the Choice program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment, computers, or transportation if required to be provided or reimbursed by the RUSD.

Payment of Tuition – Grades 9-12

A private school may, in addition to the state aid payment it receives, charge a Choice student tuition in an amount determined by the school if both of the following apply: (a) the student is in grades 9 through 12; and (b) the family income of the student exceeds 220% of the federal poverty level as shown in the table below. If the child's parents/legal guardians are married their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income for tuition purposes.

220% of the Federal Poverty Level -- 2015-16 Maximum

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Yearly Income</u>
1	\$26,085
2	\$35,160
3	\$44,235
4	\$53,310

For each additional member add \$9,075

Special Education Services

A Choice school may not discriminate against a child with special needs during the admissions process or elsewhere. However, as a private school, the Choice school is only required to offer those services to assist students with special needs that it can provide with minor adjustments. Parents should contact the public school district in which the private is located in for more information on the services provided to children with special needs enrolled in the public schools and the lesser services that the school district provides those children enrolled in private schools.

How to Apply

Parents must complete the on-line student application available at: <http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide>. An email is required to use the online application.

In addition to completing the on-line student application, parents must provide residency documentation and income documentation (if the application is for a new student) directly to the school(s) they apply to during the application period or their application is ineligible. Parents/guardians may either: (a) provide their social security numbers or taxpayer identification number to the school and have the Department of Revenue determine whether the student is

Open Application Periods

February 2 – February 20
March 1 – March 20
April 1 – April 20
May 1 – May 20
June 1 – June 20
July 1 – July 20
August 1 – August 20
September 1 – September 14
October 1 – October 20
(for 2nd semester participation only)
November 1 – November 20
(for 2nd semester participation only)
December 1 – January 7
(for 2nd semester participation only)

income eligible for the program; or (b) use the Department of Public Instruction's income determination method by answering a series of income questions in the on-line application and providing paper income documentation to the school(s) as directed in the application during the open application period. The school will verify that the student meets the income requirements. Applicants must also provide proof of residency directly to the schools during the open application period. A student can apply to the Choice program at one or more schools during the open application period(s).

If a Choice school receives applications from more eligible students than it has Choice seats available, selection of students will be determined on a random basis. **Schools cannot use grades, test scores, or other factors besides eligibility for the program in admitting Choice students.** Preference may be given to Choice students continuing at the private school, siblings of students who attended the private school in the prior year, siblings of students already accepted at the school and students continuing in the choice program who attended another choice school in the prior year. **Parents are encouraged to keep in touch with the school to receive the latest information.** Schools must notify parents within 60 days of receiving the application of admission or non-admission to the Choice program at the school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1 Can the Choice school require fundraising and school service of the Choice parent?

A.1 A school may not impose any penalties on a parent or child in the Choice program for failure to engage in fundraising (which would include any required service to the school).

Q.2 Is transportation available in the Choice program?

A.2 A private Choice school is not required to provide transportation to Choice students. If the school chooses to provide transportation, a fee may be charged. In some cases, RUSD will provide transportation or pay the parent a certain amount for their transportation costs through a contract. Check directly with the private school you plan to attend or RUSD.

Q.3 Can I enroll my child in a Choice school after the school year begins? Can my child transfer to another Choice school in the middle of the school year?

A.3 A private Choice school may enroll new students into the Choice program if the school has a slot available and the school has established open application periods. Furthermore, a child may apply to the Choice program at more than one private school at the same time. A student application must be filled out (and submitted directly to the school) for each Choice school, either to continue from one year to the next, transfer from one school to another or to enroll in the Choice program for the first time.

Q.4 How does the payment process work?

A.4 The state issues payments to the school where the child is enrolled in the Choice program (a check in September and November based on student attendance on the 3rd Friday in September and a check in February and May based on student attendance on the 2nd Friday in January.)

Q.5 Is a child in the Choice program at a private religious school required to participate in religious activities or instruction?

A.5 No. If a Choice student's parent or guardian submits to the student's teacher or the school's principal a written request that the student be excused from any religious activity, the teacher and school must honor that request.

Q.6 Are there statutory procedures regarding student suspensions and expulsions that a private Choice school is required to follow?

A.6 Yes. State law requires private Choice schools to have procedures in place regarding student suspensions and expulsions. Parents should ask the Choice school they are considering for their child to provide a copy of the procedures the school has in place for imposition of or appeal of suspensions or expulsions.

For more information contact:

Private School Choice Programs
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Toll-free: 888-245-2732, ext. 3

Web site: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/choice_programs



2015-16

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2015-16 School Year

The Racine Parental Choice Program

(RPCP)

Information for Parents

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
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